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Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-10 IO-14
L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-20 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 /106 W
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O 281544Z JUN 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2557
AMEMBASSY BONN

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FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN; STATE FOR ACDA:FISCHER

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED
28 JUNE 1978. BEGIN TEXT:

-WARSAW PACT REVEALS ANOTHER PART OF ITS "MBFR" REDUCTIONS PLAN

--(A.N.-N.A.) - THE 174TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE VIENNA CONFERENCE ON FORCE REDUCTIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE - MBFR - LAST THURSDAY ENABLED MR. INGO OESTER, HEAD OF THE EAST GERMAN DELEGATION, TO PROVIDE IMPORTANT DETAILS CONCERNING THE RECENT WARSAW PACT COUNTER-PROPOSAL IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

-MR. OESTER NOTABLY EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMUNIST BLOC HAD MADE A CONCESSION IN RELATION TO ITS PREVIOUS POSITION BY
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STATING THAT THE PACT'S LATEST INITIATIVE WOULD ENABLE NATO COUNTRIES TO SLIGHTLY INCREASE THEIR FORCES IN EUROPE ONCE AN "MBFR" AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED.

-ACCORDING TO DETAILS RECENTLY PROVIDED BY THE EAST, A WARSAW PACT OR NATO MEMBER NATION CAN, ONCE AN "MBFR" GENERAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED, INCREASE ITS GROUND

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FORCES BY THE EQUIVALENT OF HALF THE REDUCTIONS MADE
UNILATERALLY BY ANOTHER ALLY.

-THUS, FOR INSTANCE, USING HYPOTHETICAL FIGURES, IN THE
EVENT OF BELGIUM REDUCING (FOR BUDGETARY OR OTHER REASONS)
ITS GROUND FORCES BY 40,000 (ONCE THE "MBFR" AGREEMENT HAD
BEEN CONCLUDED), FEDERAL GERMANY (OR ANY OTHER DIRECT
PARTICIPANT) COULD INCREASE ITS LAND ARMY BY 20,000 MEN,
TO COMPENSATE. TO THE EXTENT THAT TOTAL NATO FORCES WOULD
NOT EXCEED 700,000 (THE CEILING FOR FORCES ON BOTH SIDES
WHICH THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WISH TO ATTAIN), THE ALLIANCE
COULD REPLACE THE REMAINING 20,000 MEN, EXPLAIN EASTERN
DIPLOMATS.

-THE EAST GERMAN DELEGATE EMPHASISED THAT THE SOCIALIST
PROPOSALS CONSTITUTE "A MAJOR COMPROMISE."

-IN FACT, ON THIS POINT NATO DIPLOMATS AGREE, DESPITE THE
FACT THAT THIS COMPROMISE WOULD PRACTICALLY ONLY AFFECT THE
BUNDESWEHR AS FAR AS WESTERN EUROPE IS CONCERNED.

-SINCE THE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED IN 1973, THE SOVIETS HAVE
ENDEAVORED TO OBTAIN A "RIGHT TO INSPECT" THE ORGANIZATION
OF EUROPEAN ARMED FORCES THROUGH AN "MBFR" AGREEMENT. IT
IS PRECISELY THE WEST GERMAN ARMY WHICH THEY HAVE IN MIND,
BECAUSE THEY FEAR THIS ARMY'S PREDOMINANCE IN EUROPE IN
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THE EVENT OF THE OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES REDUCING THEIR
OWN FORCES FOR REASONS INDEPENDENT OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS.
THAT IS WHY THE EAST HAS ALWAYS INSISTED ON "NATIONAL"
CEILINGS BEING LAID DOWN FOR EUROPEAN FORCES.

-THE LATEST WARSAW PACT MOVE THEREFORE CONSTITUTES A RE-
LAXING OF THE EAST'S POSITION. WHILE LOOKING FOR A SORT
OF NATIONAL CONTROL OVER WEST EUROPEAN FORCES, THE PACT,
THROUGH ITS CONCESSION, IS ADMITTING THAT THERE CAN BE A
LIMITED REORGANIZATION.

-AS FAR AS NATO IS CONCERNED, THIS CONCESSION WILL
PRACTICALLY ONLY AFFECT THE BUNDESWEHR AND AMERICAN FORCES
IN EUROPE. THEY ARE ESSENTIALLY THE ONLY TWO NATO ARMIES
WHICH, AMONG THE "DIRECT PARTICIPANTS," WOULD BE IN A
POSITION, FROM THE POLITICAL AND BUDGETARY POINTS OF VIEW,
TO OFFSET IN MILITARY FORCES THE REDUCTIONS DECIDED IN
THE FUTURE BY THE OTHER WESTERN "DIRECT PARTICIPANTS" IN
EUROPE (CANADA, GREAT BRITAIN AND THE BENELUX COUNTRIES).

-HAVING SAID THIS, ONE SHOULD NOT MINIMISE THE IMPORTANCE
OF THIS PART OF THE EAST'S LATEST INITIATIVE, SINCE IT

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CONSIDERABLY REDUCES THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO POSITIONS IN
THE NEGOTIATIONS.

-ASTUTENESS OF WARSAW PACT COUNTER-PROPOSAL.
-SINCE THE WARSAW PACT SUBMITTED ITS LATEST "MBFR"
INITIATIVE ON 8 JUNE LAST, NATO IS CAREFULLY EXAMINING
THE DETAILS OF THE EASTERN PROPOSAL. THUS IT WAS NOTED,
ALLIED SOURCES REVEAL, THAT THE PACT HAS NOT COMPLETELY
ABANDONED ITS IDEA OF EQUAL PERCENTAGE FORCE REDUCTIONS
ON BOTH SIDES. AND THIS IS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE EAST

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STRESSED THAT DURING THE FIRST-PHASE REDUCTION, ACCORDING
TO ITS PLAN, NATO WOULD ONLY HAVE TO WITHDRAW HALF THE
NUMBER WHICH THE PACT WOULD HAVE TO WITHDRAW. WE WOULD
POINT OUT THAT THE COMMUNIST PLAN ADVOCATES A FIRST-PHASE
REDUCTION OF 14,000 MEN FROM AMERICAN FORCES IN EXCHANGE
FOR 30,000 SOVIET SOLDIERS.

-IT IS IN FACT THE REDUCTIONS FORMULA FOR THE SECOND PHASE,
WHICH THE EAST SUBMITTED TO NATO IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS
LATEST INITIATIVE, WHICH REVEALS THE EAST'S PRECISE
INTENTIONS.

-THE PACT NOTABLY SUGGESTS THAT IN THE SECOND PHASE ALL
WESTERN COUNTRIES REDUCE THEIR FORCES BY THE SAME PERCENTAGE
(THIS ALSO OBTAINS FOR THE UNITED STATES, EXCEPT THAT IT
WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE
REDUCED ITS FORCES BY 14,000 IN THE FIRST PHASE). THE
FORMULA WOULD BE THE SAME FOR EASTERN COUNTRIES, AND THE
USSR WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE 30,000 SOLDIERS ALREADY

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WITHDRAWN.

-IN CALCULATING ON THE BASIS OF THE PACT'S REDUCTIONS
ASPIRATIONS -- EVENTUALLY THE EAST WOULD HAVE WITHDRAWN
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105,000 MEN AND NATO 91,000 -- ONE CAN SEE THAT IN REALITY
THE TWO ALLIANCES WOULD HAVE REDUCED THEIR FORCES
ESSENTIALLY BY THE SAME PERCENTAGE: 12 FOR ALLIED FORCES,
AND 13 FOR WARSAW PACT FORCES.

-NATO HAS NEVER APPRECIATED THE IDEA OF EQUAL PERCENTAGE
REDUCTIONS BECAUSE SUCH A SYSTEM OF REDUCTIONS WOULD ONLY
PERPETUATE, BUT AT A LOWER LEVEL OF FORCES, THE PRESENT
DISEQUILIBRIUM (IN THE EAST'S FAVOR) BETWEEN THE TWO
SIDES' FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. END TEXT. CLAUSSEN

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